

Appl. No. : 09/403,800  
Filed : February 22, 2000

### REMARKS

First, the Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for extending an invitation to discuss the claimed device in view of the cited references – the Hirshstein reference (U.S. Patent No. 2,284,737) and the Pravicha et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 745,519). In particular, the Examiner noted that the overflow-pipe (9) in Figure 1 of the Pravicha reference functions as a siphon. The Applicant now summarizes why the overflow-pipe (9) does not function as a siphon, and why there would be no motivation to have a siphon on the Pravicha apparatus.

#### Operation of the Pravicha separator

The Pravicha separator comprises a separating tank compartment (8) fed at water surface level with the oil-water mixture, connected to a compartment (7) to which 'oil-free' water flows through tube (6). There is no under flow connection between the separating tank compartment (8) and the compartment (7). From the compartment (7), 'oil-free' water is delivered to drain through an "overflow-pipe 9" (page 1, line 82 of the Pravicha reference).

The Pravicha separator is intended to run liquid full. That is, there is no capability for (or intention of) lowering of the operating water level to provide capacity to accumulate and increase substantially the holding (residence) time for inflowing oil-water mixtures. For example, in Figure 1 of the Pravicha reference, the separation compartment (8) remains full of water as deliberately designed and the only water exit is via tube (6), which is intended to overflow 'oil-free' water into compartment (7). Thus, the tube (6) overflow level determines the surface level of the liquid in compartment (8). Also in Figures 1, 1a and 3, the oil which accumulates on the surface in the separation compartment (8) overflows through the spout (10), the weir height of which is adjusted so that only oil overflows. This can be achieved by setting the adjustable gauge (12) so that it is a little higher than the outlet of tube (6). Thus, the surface level in the separation compartment (8) is intended to remain substantially steady at the chosen setting of the gauge (12).

The Applicant notes that it is difficult for one to see any point in lowering the water level in chamber (7), as it is disconnected from and can have no influence on the level in the separation chamber (8). Thus, as the Examiner agreed, there is no motivation in the Pravicha separator to install a siphon on the chamber (7).

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Pravicha separator does not suggest or anticipate the concept of lowering the operating liquid level (by means of a

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siphon) to provide capacity to store incoming oil-water mixture without an outflow from the separator (which beneficially and substantially increases the time available for oil-water separation).

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### SUMMARY

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant submits that the amended claims are now allowable over the cited references. Should there be any impediment to the prompt allowance of this application that could be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at the number shown.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 6-26-2003

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